



## State of New Jersey

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HPO-F2004-260 PROD  
June 22, 2004  
Log # 04-0629-1

Mr. Vernon A. Williams  
Secretary  
Surface Transportation Board  
1925 K Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20423-0001

AB-167 (SUB-NO. 1184X)  
received  
6/25/04

**Attention: Section on Environmental Analysis**

Dear Mr. Williams:

As Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer for New Jersey, in accordance with 36 CFR Part 800: Protection of Historic Properties, as published in the *Federal Register* on December 12, 2000 (65 FR 77725-77739), I am providing **Consultation Comments** for the following proposed action:

**STB Number AB 167 (Sub-Number 1184X)  
Consolidated Railroad Corporation (CONRAIL)  
Sayreville Running Track (formerly Raritan River Railroad)  
Abandonment of Railroad Right of Way milepost 10.85 to milepost 11.31  
North Brunswick Township, Middlesex County.**

**SUMMARY:** Previous consultation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) evaluated the historic significance and integrity of the former Raritan River Railroad right of way (the currently named Conrail Sayreville Running Track) and identified the **Raritan River Railroad Historic District** as eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The NJDOT proposed project requires the removal of the US Route 1 Bridge over, and the abandonment and partial acquisition of, the Sayreville Running Track (formerly Raritan River Railroad) west of railroad milepost 10.85. This NJDOT proposed project was determined to have (conditionally) no adverse effect on historic properties if developed and implemented in accordance with conditions described in section 800.5 **Assessment of Adverse Effects** of Historic Preservation Office (HPO) letter HPO-C2004-224 PROD (copy attached). Based upon this previous determination and the anticipated fulfillment of project conditions by the NJDOT, I concur that the abandonment of the Sayreville Running Track between mileposts 10.85 and 11.31 will have no adverse effect upon historic properties.

#### 800.4 Identification of Historic Properties

HPO staff intensively investigated the historic significance and integrity of the former Raritan River Railroad right of way. Previous HPO comments for projects involving other segments of this right of way have highlighted the state and local historic significance and integrity of the railroad and the eligibility of at least one portion of the line in Milltown.

I reaffirm the conclusion of HPO letter HPO-C2004-224 PROD that the former Raritan River Railroad right of way is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places as a historic district under Criteria A and C. The Raritan River Railroad mainline began in South Amboy, included right of way through Sayreville, Parlin, South River, Milltown, and North Brunswick, and ended in New Brunswick. Topographic maps note Bergen Hill, Phoenix, and Sayreville Junction as points of reference along the right of way. The Raritan River Railroad originally included branches or spurs identified as the Kearney Branch, Sayreville Branch, Gillespie Branch, South River Branch, Serviss Branch, and Milltown Spur. The eligible historic district would include the former mainline right of way from South Amboy to the east side of Georges Road (New Jersey Route 173) adjacent to the National Musical String Building in New Brunswick and the surviving segments of the Kearney Branch and Gillespie Branch. The section of the former mainline right of way between South Amboy and Phoenix (the junction of the Kearney Branch), including the former mainline connection to the Pennsylvania Railroad's Camden to South Amboy Branch (Camden and Amboy Railroad Historic District), is eligible for the NRHP despite the previous abandonment and removal of rails and ties. Exceptions to this would include the short (non-contributing) segments between Pine and Feltus Streets where the right of way has been replaced by residential construction and a segment between the former junction with the Kearney Branch and west of the Garden State Parkway (Kennedy Drive in Sayreville) where warehouses and a new road have destroyed the integrity of the right of way.

As was noted in previous consultation comments to the FHWA and NJDOT, the resources contributing to the historic significance and integrity of the Raritan River Railroad Historic District include, but are not limited to, 166-170 John Street, South Amboy (the former corporate headquarters of the Raritan River Railroad), the surviving components of the Raritan River Railroad - New York and Long Branch Railroad interchange track grade at South Amboy, any surviving foundations or remnants of the Raritan River Railroad shops in South Amboy, the western abutment of the (removed) railroad bridge over Feltus Street, the bridge over the Pennsylvania Railroad's Camden and Amboy line, the moveable bridge over the South River at South River, the Milltown Freight Station, the deck girder bridge (Milltown Trestle) over Lawrence Brook in Milltown, the Michelin Tire Company (former Meyer Rubber Company) spur and bridge over Lawrence Brook in Milltown (previously evaluated as eligible for listing in the NRHP), and railroad undergrade bridges over Main Street (Sayreville), the former Crossman Company clay pit railroad (Sayreville), and Minniska Avenue (Parlin), as well as the India Rubber Company building in Milltown, (listed on the New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places), the Michelin Tire Company (former Meyer

Rubber Company) buildings in Milltown, and the NJ/NRHP listed National Musical String Company building in New Brunswick.

The Raritan River Railroad began operations in 1888 and eventually operated a 12.6 mile mainline between South Amboy and New Brunswick. The railroad also operated an extensive network (totaling approximately 11 miles) of branch and industrial spur lines that served the brick, clay, munitions, rubber, and chemical industries located on the south side of the Raritan River. The Raritan River Railroad was the sole railroad outlet for the products of the extensive and historically significant Sayre and Fisher brick manufacturing plants located on the south side of the Raritan River. Sayre and Fisher was itself one of the best known and most significant of the Raritan River area brick manufacturers.

The Raritan River Railroad was one of the most distinctive of New Jersey's short line railroads, was instrumental in the development of Sayreville, Parlin, South River, and Milltown, and remains the railroad most strongly associated with Middlesex County and the extensive industrial development on the south side of the Raritan River.

#### **800.5 Assessment of Adverse Effects**

My previous consultation comments to the FHWA and NJDOT noted that the NJDOT proposed removal of the US Route 1 Bridge over, and the partial acquisition of, the Sayreville Running Track project would have (conditionally) no adverse effect on the Raritan River Railroad Historic District if NJDOT fulfilled the following conditions:

the NJDOT shall minimize the acquisition of property from the **Raritan River Railroad Historic District** (NJDOT shall prepare and submit to the HPO information that documents the minimization and confirms that the operational viability of the remaining Sayreville Industrial Track [Raritan River Railroad Historic District] will not be affected);

interpretive displays that present the history of the **Raritan River Railroad** and describe the **Raritan River Railroad Historic District** shall be prepared, installed, and maintained by the NJDOT;

the size, format, content, and number of the interpretive displays shall be based upon the quality and quantity of the available historic information regarding the **Raritan River Railroad Historic District** and the NJDOT shall actively consult with the HPO regarding the development and location of the displays (displays on both sides of Route 1 and on the eastern side of George's Road should be considered as the appropriate minimum); and

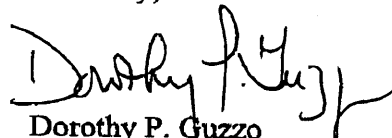
the NJDOT shall consult with the HPO and the other consulting parties regarding any other opportunities to publicly acknowledge, recognize or promote the **Raritan River Railroad Historic District**.

Based upon this previously issued conditional no adverse effect determination and the anticipated satisfactory fulfillment of project conditions by the NJDOT, I concur that the abandonment of the Sayreville Running Track between mileposts 10.85 and 11.31 will have no adverse effect upon historic properties.

The HPO understands that Conrail, in cooperation with the NJDOT, will be reconfiguring the western end of the remaining Sayreville Running Track to accommodate continued service to local customers. The HPO acknowledges that the anticipated reconfiguration of the Sayreville Running Track will likewise have no adverse effect upon historic properties.

If you have any questions regarding the assessment of historic resources or project effects, please contact Charles Scott at (609) 633-2396.

Sincerely,



Dorothy P. Guzzo  
Deputy State Historic  
Preservation Officer

C: John K. Enright, CONRAIL  
Elkins Green, NJDOT  
Theodore Matthews, NJDOT  
Jeanette Mar, Environmental Coordinator, FHWA  
Young Kim, Area Engineer, FHWA  
Frank Wong, Rutgers University  
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Middlesex County (Administrator)

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